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ABSTRACT

Teacher attitudes toward mainstreaming and classroom management styles of 75 experienced, elementary-level teachers were examined using an attitude scale and a questionnaire based on the induction-sensitization paradigm of socialization. Positive attitudes toward mainstreaming were modestly correlated ($r=.20$, $p < .04$) with an inductive approach to classroom management. Lower grade level teachers and less experienced teachers displayed more positive attitudes toward mainstreaming. Lower grade level teachers also revealed a more inductive style of classroom management. Gender differences were not indicated for either variable. Detailed analyses of these results and suggestions for training teachers are provided. (Author)

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Attitude Toward Mainstreaming and Approach to Classroom Management

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Abstract

Teacher attitude toward mainstreaming and classroom management styles of 75 experienced, elementary-level teachers were examined using an attitude scale and a questionnaire based on the induction-sensitization paradigm of socialization. Positive attitudes toward mainstreaming were modestly correlated ($r=.20$, $p<.04$) with an inductive approach to classroom management. Lower grade level teachers and less experienced teachers displayed more positive attitudes toward mainstreaming. Lower grade level teachers also revealed a more inductive style of classroom management. Gender differences were not indicated for either variable. Detailed analyses of these results and suggestions for training teachers are provided.

Since the implementation of Public Law 94-142, the number of handicapped students receiving special education services has increased and the preferred service delivery system has become mainstreaming (Reynolds & Birch, 1983). Teacher attitude toward mainstreaming is an important variable related to successful mainstreaming and has been investigated by numerous researchers (e.g. Childs, 1981; Larrivee & Cook, 1979; Moore & Fine, 1978; and Schultz, 1982). In addition, Hannah and Pliner (1983) reviewed the literature examining the relationship between certain teacher characteristics and attitudes toward mainstreaming. These studies have indicated the importance of a positive teacher attitude toward mainstreaming.

The emphasis on the mainstreaming process has also expanded the importance of classroom management. Teachers continue to receive many suggestions of appropriate methods for resolving academic and behavioral difficulties. Many of these techniques have developed from work within special education classes and from the teacher effectiveness literature (e.g. Gardino, 1981; Good & Brophy, 1980; Hasazi & York, 1978; and Leviton & Kiraly, 1979). However, studies relating classroom management and attitude toward mainstreaming are lacking as pointed out by Hannah and Pliner (1983).

Therefore, the present study is designed to examine the relationship between elementary level regular classroom teachers' attitudes toward mainstreaming and their style of classroom management using a model of teaching proposed by Smith (1978a).

Smith (1978a) emphasized the role of the teacher as a socializing agent and proposed a model of teaching based on the induction-sensitization paradigm of parental socialization developed by Aronfreed (1968). A questionnaire which assesses the teacher's style of socialization was developed and validated through classroom observation. The research verified two distinct styles of classroom management. The inductive style was characterized by an emphasis on the child's role and responsibility in behavioral situations, the use of positive reinforcement, the ignoring of inappropriate behavior (whenever possible), and techniques to facilitate the development of internal controls for behavior. The sensitizing style was distinguished by little attention to the child's motives or responsibiliities in the behavioral situation, an emphasis on the punishment of misbehavior, the ignoring of appropriate behavior, and a reliance on external control of behavior (Smith, 1978a, 1978b).

Research with this model (Smith, 1978b) has demonstrated that classroom teachers were more sensitizing in their response to male students and in resolving aggressive and dependent behaviors. Smith (1980) confirmed these results and indicated that male teachers were more sensitizing in response to students (especially males) than female teachers. In addition, research has demonstrated that pupil personnel workers (e.g. school psychologists, special education teachers and regular education teachers pursuing certification in special education) prefer more inductive approaches to classroom management than regular education teachers (Smith, 1983; 1984).

Subjects

The subjects for this study included 75 elementary level classroom teachers (15 male, 60 female) in a suburban Minneapolis-St. Paul school district. The level of teaching experience ranged from 11 years to 34 years with a mean of 19.1 years. All subjects were asked to participate voluntarily in the study. Of the eligible teachers from all of the district's seven elementary schools, 71% of the teachers participated.

Procedure

Data for the study were collected during the fall of 1983. Each participant completed the Classroom Management Questionnaire (CMQ; Smith, 1978a; 1978b) and the Attitudes Toward Mainstreaming Questionnaire (ATMQ; Larrivee & Cook, 1979). Both instruments were completed in the same session and they were presented in a counterbalanced order.

The CMQ consists of 36 forced choice items in which the individual chooses a strategy to use in resolving a specific behavioral incident that is described. The incidents consist of academic, dependent and aggressive behaviors. The intervention strategies are based on Aronfreed's inductive and sensitizing styles of socialization. Test-retest reliability for the CMQ was reported at .85 and the Kuder-Richardson procedure yielded an internal consistency estimate of .76. Validation of the CMQ through direct classroom observation of groups of teachers scoring one standard deviation above and below the mean on the CMQ was accomplished by using the Flanders Interaction

Analysis Categories System. Statistically significant differences in teacher behavior consistent with the induction-sensitization model were revealed and are discussed in detail elsewhere (Smith, 1978c).

The AMQ is a 30 item attitude scale using a five point rating scale. It was constructed by the method of summated ratings to examine the effects of selected institutional variables on the attitude toward mainstreaming of the regular classroom teacher. Split half reliability was reported at .92.

Results

A Pearson product moment correlation between the style of classroom management and attitudes toward mainstreaming was calculated. An inductive style of classroom management was positively correlated with a positive attitude toward mainstreaming ($r=.20$, $p<.04$).

A one-way analysis of variance was performed on the scores of each questionnaire with teacher gender as the independent variable. The results were not significant for classroom management style as measured by the CMQ with $F(1,74)=1.86$, $p<.08$ or attitude toward mainstreaming as measured by the ATMQ with $F(1,74)=0.00$, $p<.92$.

Additional 2 x 2 analyses of variance were conducted with scores on the CMQ and ATMQ as dependent variables and grade levels (K-2, 3-5) and teaching experience (11-19 years, 20-34 years) as independent variables. Significant main effects were indicated on the CMQ by grade with $F(1,71)=2.87$, $p<.006$ and on the ATMQ by grade with $F(1,71)=2.41$, $p<.02$ and by teaching experience with $F(1,71)=4.20$, $p<.001$. Lower grade teachers (K-2) displayed more positive attitudes toward mainstreaming

and a preference for a more inductive style of classroom management than their upper grade (3-5) colleagues. Less experienced teachers were more positive in their attitudes toward mainstreaming than their more experienced colleagues.

Discussion

Positive attitudes toward mainstreaming demonstrated a modest relationship to the inductive style of classroom management. The questionnaire results suggest that teachers with positive attitudes toward mainstreaming are more likely to utilize management techniques that emphasize reasoning and place responsibility for behavior on the individual student. Such management techniques have been related to success in preventing future misbehavior (Aronfreed, 1968; Hoffman, 1977). Therefore, it is possible that teachers using these techniques have fewer behavioral difficulties, and thus, are more amenable to students with special needs.

An important finding of the present study is the lack of gender differences in classroom management. Previous research with the CMQ (Smith, 1978b; 1980; 1983) had indicated distinct gender differences with male teachers displaying a more sensitizing or punitive approach to resolving discipline problems as compared to female teachers. As with the present study, samples involved elementary-level teachers. The present results, therefore, may indicate a change has occurred in the elementary school over the past five years with a minimizing of the difference in management style between male and female teachers. Clearly, additional studies utilizing larger and more national samples

are needed to verify or reject this hypothesis. In addition, it should be noted that the present sample is highly experienced and that most of the teachers have taught exclusively in the same district and with the same peer group. Therefore, their shared experiences may have resulted in the development of similar attitudes, beliefs and management strategies. This situation, however, this situation is not unique, as many districts across the nation are experiencing similar stability in teaching staff with an increase in teacher homogeneity.

The present research indicates that teachers of kindergarten through second grade students are more inductive in classroom management approach. This may be related to the smaller class size at this level as compared to the upper elementary level grades. In addition, the authors' experiences have been that as grade level increases, teachers place greater emphasis on mastering the specified curriculum and less emphasis on individual differences. These observations appear consistent with the present results as the inductive approach focuses on the needs of individual students to a greater degree than the sensitizing approach.

A more positive attitude toward mainstreaming was evidenced by the kindergarten through second grade teachers and the less experienced teachers. Both findings are consistent with previous studies (e. g. Larrivee & Cook, 1979; Harasymiw & Horne, 1975). A less structured and more flexible curriculum at the lower grades may be related to these results as well as smaller class size.

The results for the experience variable are not surprising as newer teachers have been exposed to more training (both preservice and

inservice) in mainstreaming and exceptionalities in general. In addition, these teachers have probably had exceptional students in their classes for their entire teaching careers, while more experienced teachers may have had less training and direct experience in these areas.

Implications

This study suggests that mainstreaming of exceptional students is likely to proceed in a smoother manner at lower grade levels and with newer teachers, as these groups expressed more positive attitudes toward the mainstreaming process. A basic assumption, of course, is that attitude does indeed translate into behavior. This assumption clearly needs to be investigated in future studies. In addition, the relationship between mainstreaming attitude and classroom management style needs further investigation. Although the present results suggest a modest relationship between these variables, the exact nature of that relationship is not clear. Future studies are needed to examine differences in mainstreaming attitudes and classroom management styles of groups of teachers who are more effective and less effective in meeting the needs of mainstreamed students.

Two target groups for training with regard to mainstreaming are suggested: elementary teachers at upper grade levels (grades four through six) and teachers with considerable teaching experience. The modest relationship between style of classroom management and attitude toward mainstreaming suggests that both components should be included in the training package.

The school psychologist is in an ideal position to be involved in such training. Previous research (Larrivee & Cook, 1979) is clear in showing that administrative support and availability of resource personnel are important to mainstreaming success. In addition, appropriate preparation for mainstreaming individual students is also needed (Zigler & Muenchow, 1979). The school psychologist should certainly be involved in these preparations and should be available for both formal and informal consultation with teachers, principals and parents.

Inservice training is more likely to be effective if it occurs over a period of time rather than a "one-shot" activity (Harris, 1980). Such training should be tailored to the individual needs of the participants, and perhaps, focus on a specific case in which mainstreaming is to be implemented for the first time (for the student or the particular classroom teacher). If a learning disabled student is to be mainstreamed into a fourth grade classroom, a series of inservices could be prepared on such topics as characteristics of LD students, preparation of the student and classroom for mainstreaming, instructional needs of the student and classroom management approaches. The school psychologist should then be available for consultation as the process is actually implemented. Group discussions of any problems encountered and their solutions would also be appropriate.

The present research has suggested that classroom management style and mainstreaming attitude are modestly related. Perhaps the most significant results of the study are the lack of gender differences in

both classroom management and attitudes toward mainstreaming and the roles that grade level and experience play in these areas.

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Table 1

Mean Scores on the CMQ and the ATMQ by Teacher Gender

	Male	Female
	N=15	N=60
CMQ	25.53	27.23
	(4.84)	(4.19)
ATMQ	101.87	102.05
	(12.67)	(16.72)

Standard deviation expressed in ().

Table 2

Mean Scores on the CMQ and ATMQ by Grade Level and Teaching Experience

	Grade		Experience (years)	
	K-2	3-5	11-19	20-34
	N=38	N=37	N=56	N=19
CMQ	27.58	26.19	27.00	26.58
	(3.82)	(4.74)	(4.56)	(3.75)
ATMQ	103.71	100.27	103.70	97.05
	(13.79)	(17.86)	(14.34)	(19.39)

Standard deviation expressed in ().